

Governor Carney Announces Reopening of Beaches to Delawareans

Governor Carney signed the [Seventeenth Modification to State of Emergency](#)

Beaches, pools, ice cream shops to open with restrictions; Out-of-state quarantine will remain in place

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Thursday announced that the State of Delaware will lift restrictions on Delaware beaches and [community pools](#) at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, subject to strict social distancing requirements and other restrictions. Ice cream shops and trucks will reopen with restrictions effective 5:00 p.m. this Friday, May 15.

Governor Carney made the announcement after consultation with public health experts at the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) and mayors of Delaware's beach towns. Delaware's [mandatory 14-day quarantine](#) for out-of-state travelers and [ban on short term rentals](#) will remain in effect. Non-Delawareans who have been in Delaware for at least 14 days will be permitted to use the beaches.

Strict social distancing and hygiene requirements will accompany the reopening of Delaware's beaches. Beachgoers must maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and anyone outside their household. Face coverings must be worn on the boardwalk and are encouraged on the beach. Restaurants and bars are still limited to delivery and take-out services only.

The full list of requirements and recommendations for beach towns and beachgoers is available below.

[Click here](#) for DPH guidance on reopening public and community swimming pools.

“Summer at the beach and the pool is a huge part of life for so many Delawareans. As we ease our way into a new normal, we’re trying to find ways for Delawareans to enjoy the outdoors and the company of their families,” said **Governor Carney**. “I want to be very clear to our friends who want to travel here from outside the state. While we hope one day soon to be able to welcome you to our beaches, that time has not yet come. We need to reopen Delaware in a controlled way that doesn’t put anyone at risk.”

“I cannot emphasize strongly enough that during this everyone must continue to keep a six foot distance from others, and to wear face coverings when out, even when going to enjoy activities permitted under these limited re-opening conditions,” said **DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay**. “It’s incredibly important that everyone exercise common sense and follow the restrictions so we don’t have a re-resurgence in cases of COVID-19 and are forced to tighten them again.”

Under Thursday’s announcement, community pools in Delaware may reopen at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22, but are limited to 20 percent of regular capacity. Swim lessons or practices of swim teams are not permitted. Ice cream stores and trucks may reopen for take-out or curbside pick-up with strict social distancing measures at 5:00 p.m. this Friday, May 15. Children under 12-years-old must be accompanied by an adult.

“With the restrictions being lifted for our beaches, pools and ice cream shops, it is critical that we all continue to act as if we already have coronavirus,” said **Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician**. “We need to remain at least 6

feet away from non-family members, wear a face covering in public, wash our hands often, wipe down commonly used surfaces, and cough and sneeze into our face coverings or elbows. Preventing flare-ups of COVID-19 is our shared responsibility. It is the only way we will protect ourselves and our neighbors.”

Beaches at Cape Henlopen, Delaware Seashore and Fenwick Island state parks may limit capacity to vehicles to enforce social distancing. Governor Carney announced Thursday that current surf fishing restrictions on the number of individuals allowed per vehicle will be lifted on May 22 at 5:00 p.m. However, all individuals in the vehicle must be from the same household.

Surf fishing access may also be limited to enforce social distancing and avoid overcrowding.

“Our state park beaches are always popular places for people to get fresh air, exercise and create memorable experiences, but the restrictions have been critical to keep us all safe. As we allow increased beach activities, we urge Delawareans to avoid crowds and maintain at least six feet from others on and off the sand,” said **DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin**. “We will be using entrance and parking restrictions to manage capacity. We’re trying to provide opportunities for Delawareans to continue to enjoy our state parks, but it is not back to normal by any stretch.”

To enforce the out-of-state quarantine as Delaware beaches reopen, Delaware State Police will station troopers at routes typically used by out-of-state travelers. Travelers will be stopped, asked a series of questions, and given information about the 14-day quarantine requirement under Governor Carney’s State of Emergency declaration. Violations of the emergency declaration, or [any of its modifications](#), constitute a criminal offense.

Local officials also are encouraged to limit capacity on their

beaches to prevent overcrowding and potential spread of COVID-19.

“The Delaware State Police will continue to enforce the laws of the State of Delaware, to include those associated with the 14-day quarantine requirement for out-of-state travelers,” said **Colonel Nathaniel McQueen Jr., Superintendent-Delaware State Police**. “Our emphasis and goal in enforcing the orders, specifically in regards to the travel restrictions, is to achieve voluntary compliance through education and awareness. The health and well-being of our Troopers, as well as the community, will remain our top priority as we continue to serve and protect, during this unprecedented event.”

Beach towns and beachgoers will be subject to certain restrictions as Delaware beaches reopen effective 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 22.

Towns must:

- Clean bathrooms, boardwalk railings, benches multiple times per day
- Close arcade games on boardwalk
- Demarcate (using tape, cones, etc.) 6 foot intervals in front of certain retail on boardwalks where lines are likely to form, entrances to the beach, or any other area where congregating or waiting in lines is likely to occur
- Identify enforcement teams

Towns are recommended to:

- Implement systems to limit capacity (like timed or day passes) on the beach

- Limit parking spaces
- Limit access points
- Designate Beach Ambassadors to educate beachgoers about social distancing and serve as liaisons to law enforcement
- Station Beach Ambassadors at access points

Regulations for beachgoers:

- Face coverings are required on boardwalk and encouraged on the beach
- Members of different households must remain 6 feet apart at all times
- Individuals with underlying health conditions or who are over 65-years-old should continue to shelter in place.
- Avoid water fountains.

Regulations for on-premise beach vendors:

- Food and beverage concession vendors must follow restaurant regulations and may only provide take-out or delivery service. Vendors must wear face coverings. Customers must be 6 feet apart while waiting in line.
- The rental of items like umbrellas, chairs, mats, kayaks, etc. are allowed so long as the vendor properly disinfects between each use/rental.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, whether related to medical or social service needs, should call Delaware 2-1-1. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Health or medically-related COVID-19 questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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